

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 23 January 2018 at 7.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Liam Curran, Carl Handley, John Muldoon, Jim Mallory and Luke Sorba

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gareth Siddorn, Councillor Maja Hilton, Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin and Councillor Pauline Morrison

62. Minutes

The meeting was adjourned and reconvened at 7:20pm

Beckenham Place Park Regeneration Update

The Chair informed Panel Members that the findings for the review of the Council's Lettings and Contract Procedures Policy would be reported to the next Business Panel meeting.

REOLVED that the minutes of the open meeting held on 19 December 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

63. Declarations of Interests

None received.

64. Outstanding Scrutiny Items

Report noted.

65. Notification of Late and Urgent Items

Report noted.

66. Decisions made by Mayor and Cabinet on 10 January 2018

Working in the Private Rented Sector

The Housing Needs Manager introduced the report.

The Chair said it was good to note that the Council was actively regulating the Private Rented Sector. He asked whether more could be done, and was told the government might tighten the regulation. The Chair said Bellingham had 2 storey houses in Multiple Occupation, but were just under the threshold. He said there was a very high volume of Anti-Social Behaviour in the area and something needed to be done to address this.

The Chair commented that borough-wide or constituency licensing might be better as it would cover larger areas. The Housing Needs Manager explained that it was

possible to do borough-wide licensing, as Newham had done so, but the Council would need the approval of the Secretary of State, and for that would have to submit sufficient evidence to make a good case. She said officers were aware of the issues in Bellingham and it would be investigated. Meanwhile they were working with their planning colleagues to gather the necessary information to see if Article 4 Direction would be relevant to support an application.

Councillor Sorba asked what was preventing the application and was told that Lewisham was trying to build a data platform then assess the quality of the data. She said Newham had a lot of Private Sector Renting accommodation in comparison to Lewisham, and they also have a higher level of Anti-Social Behaviour offences.

Councillor Handley asked if the penalty was sufficient to serve as a deterrent and was told that the maximum under Civil Penalty was £30k. Councillor Handley asked whether the Council was still within the 5year timeframe for the scheme, and was told this was the case, but it could be extended if need be, as Newham had theirs extended.

Councillor Muldoon asked if there were sufficient enforcement resources to make the scheme work and was told that although it was a small team the resources were deployed effectively and new funding would help provide support from police officers and a lawyer. Panel Members were informed that over the last few years the team had 2 prosecutions a year on average.

The Chair said Business Panel welcomed the work of the team and their intention to collect important data, but saw the need for the collected information to be kept under review to ensure the Council has robust data if it wished to extend the scheme. The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the decision of the Mayor be noted.
- ii. the Mayor be requested to instruct officers to keep the data collection under review to ensure the availability of robust data that could be used if the Council wished to extend the scheme.

67. Overview & Scrutiny Select Committees Work Programmes 2017-18 - verbal update

The Scrutiny Manager informed Panel members that all the Select Committees have concluded their in-depth reviews and have either forwarded their recommendations to Mayor & Cabinet or are about to do so.

Panel members were also informed that the London Scrutiny Network would be having a high profile meeting on 29 January, 2.30 – 4.30 at the GLA. Clive Betts MP, Chair of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee will be attending, alongside Jennette Arnold, Chair of London Assembly, and Professor Tony Travers Journalist and Academic at London School of Economics, plus representatives from the LGA and CfPS. Panel Members were told that there might be one or two spaces left and if they would like to attend they should book their place as soon as possible.

The Chair said it was necessary to do a report highlighting the good work scrutiny had done over the last four years as the Council was coming to the end of the current Administration. Councillor Muldoon endorsed this request and stated that it would help to demonstrate that scrutiny deserves parity of esteem with the executive.

Action >>>>> Scrutiny Manager

The Chair stated that Clive Bett's report highlighted key issues and recommendations, and access to independent legal advice which is available to Audit Committees should also be included within these recommendations. The Chair said new Council Members needed to be made aware of these issues, and Chairs of Scrutiny should be independent and not be influenced by officers or the executive. The Chair said he hoped this would be covered by Council Members induction.

The Chair thanked scrutiny officers for their good work in assisting scrutiny members during this difficult period.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the report be noted.
- ii. a report highlighting the good work scrutiny had done over the last four years be prepared by officers as soon as possible before the new Administration.

68. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act, as amended by the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to information) (Amendments) (England) Regulations 2006 and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information:

The following is a summary of the items considered in the closed part of the meeting:

69. Decision made by Mayor and Cabinet on 10 January 2018

This item was not identified for further discussion.

70. Decisions made by Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 10 January 2018

Grove Park Streetscape Works

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

Violence Against Women and Girls Contract Extension

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

71. Decision made by an Executive Director Under Delegated Authority - Carers Information Advice and Support Service - Extension of Contract 2018

This item was not identified for further discussion.

Meeting ended 8:05pm

Chair